

SECRET

Subject: Latvian Refugee Organizations. Report No: WSA-196

Date of Information: Current

Place Acquired: Stockholm, Sweden

Date Acquired: November 2, 1948

Evaluation:

Date of Report: November 3, 1948

Source: Tiberius

There are attached two copies of a memorandum entitled "Latvian Resistance Movement in Foreign Countries".

Attachments: 2
(5-page memo)

Classification SECRET

REGISTRY COPY

2007-11-18

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3828
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

WSS-196 5P

SECRET

November, 1948.

MEMORANDUM.

Subject: Latvian resistance movement in foreign countries.

Background.

1. The Latvian resistance movement in foreign countries is distinguished from the countless existing but for obvious reasons still more vague and secret home resistance movement of Latvia is, like the Estonian one, divided into two large and often antagonistic groups, the "Ulmansists" and the "Democrats". The formal line of division between the two camps was established the coup d'etat carried out on May 15, 1934, by President Karlis Ulmanis, at that time Prime Minister of Latvia (staged a coup d'etat in the USSR) and General Balodis, his Chief of Staff. This was done on the model of Estonia, where a similar coup was carried out on March 12, 1934, by President Pats and General Laidoner, and both coups, but especially the Latvian one, were motivated by fear of Soviet occupation after the advent of Hitler in Germany. This is a well known fact, (is, however, unknown to the public at large and even to the majority of Latvian and Estonian) officials; and the memory of the coup has continued to divide the people, even in exile, into the above-mentioned two different camps.

2. In Latvian academic circles, like in the Estonian ones, which are the bearers of political thought and leadership, the above line of division coincides to a great extent with the historical but to an unclear, unquestionably ridiculous line of division between the "colored" and "non-colored" academic fraternities, on the one hand, and the "non-colored" academic societies, on the other. After the dissolution of all political parties in 1934, by Ulmanis-Balodis in Latvia and Pats-Laidoner in Estonia, the above "fraternities" and "societies" were, on the whole, considered the two remaining large political opponents, the "colored" being assumed to sponsor the authoritarian regime in the first place, and the "non-colored" being assumed to represent the more democratically minded opposition. This division was arbitrary, but continues to exist in exile and explains to a great extent the variety of rumors, organizations, papers, and their mutual relations, and personal attitudes, and information circulated about each other. It is necessary to avoid spreading rumors.

WSS-196
ENCLOSURE-1

3.

In reality, both groups—the "Ulmansists" and the "Democrats", or the "colored" and "non-colored"—have absolutely the same aim: their proper establishment as displaced persons in the various foreign countries, and second, the restoration of their freedom and independence. The question in the refugee circles whether their division and mutual competition is an asset or perhaps rather a drawback in their identical aspirations.

4. Finally, it

is concluded with the background it should finally be mentioned that beside the above similarities existing between the Estonians and the Latvians, at home and in exile, there is an important difference between the two. While Estonia in 1938 succeeded in introducing by a popular vote a new and democratic constitution, Latvia, because of the more complicated home conditions, failed to do this, when the Soviet assault in 1939 and subsequent occupation in 1940 came. Latvian "Democrats" as they call themselves, a nation without a Constitution as of 1934, when in exile of Ulmanis-Balodis, and refer therefore back to their Constitution of 1922-1934, in accordance with the provisions (pronounced "Rantsans"), at present, refugee in Germany, as former Deputy Speaker of the Latvian Parliament dissolved by Ulmanis-Balodis, is constitutionally the holder of the President's rights and duties of Latvia, while the "Ulmansists" point to the fact that President Ulmanis, before his deportation to Soviet Russia in 1940, succeeded in giving certain, not quite clear, constitutional powers to Karlis Karins, Latvian Minister to the Court of St. James, London. In reality, it would seem that these powers cover only the appointment of Latvian representatives in foreign countries.

Latvian Refugee Organizations

They all have fundamentally, as stated above, two correlated aims: 1) the proper establishment of Latvian refugees in foreign countries; 2) struggle for the restoration of Latvian freedom and independence.

Latvian Central Council

5. From the above it can be gathered that President Ulmanis when entrusting Minister Karins to London in 1940, with certain exceptional powers, undoubtedly had the creation of a Latvian independence and restoration movement in foreign countries in mind. There were at that time, however, no Latvian refugees in foreign countries.

6. On the other hand, in 1943-44, during the German occupation of the Baltic States, four major political parties of Latvia—the Farmers, New Farmers (i.e., settlers in the result of the Agrarian Reform), Liberals or Democrats, and Social Democrats—constituted underground a secret resist-

③

the Latvian Central Council
- 3 -

Latvian Central Council
Leading members
of the Latvian
Central Council
Escaped to Sweden
and Germany
Collaborated with the
Dachau

ance center called (from: Latvian Central Council) which
collapsed in the Baltic, four leading members of the group,
among others, escaped to Germany (Kliva, Blodnieks,
Kruks, Bastjans) and four others to Sweden (Bruno Kalnins,
Oskars, Ojens, and Salnais). Salnais was the Minister in
Sweden. This group has been in contact with the Communist Party, com-
pleted its membership mainly from parliamentary
circles, and is at present the most active Latvian
political group in Western Europe. It has a center in Germany and another in Sweden, of
which the group in Sweden, headed by Bruno Kalnins (Social
Democrat), chiefly for reasons of communication, is the more
active group. It recognizes the authority of Bishop Rancans
but (works also) in close contact with Minister Kalnins as
London and the successor of Dr. Alfred Rancans, late Latvian
Minister at Washington. Before the death in 1948 of Salnais,
Latvian Minister at Stockholm, his home was the headquarters
of the group. After the death of Salnais, Valdemars Kreisberg,
former secretary of the Latvian Legation at Stockholm, became
formally the successor of Minister Salnais, but, as to his
work at the American Legation at Stockholm, Kreisberg declared
that he could consider himself charged d'affaires d'interim
nominally and on the condition that Mrs. Salnais, who
is a very fine and intelligent lady, would carry on with the
practical side of the work, as she before. The homes of
Bruno Kalnins and Mrs. Salnais, therefore, remain the head-
quarters of the group in Sweden.

only
an intelligent woman

7.
The group

Bruno Kalnins, son of late Dr. Paul Kalnins, Speaker of
the Latvian Parliament, is the acknowledged leader and soul
of the group. According to his friends and foes alike, he
has "very much improved lately". The remark undoubtedly has
reference to Bruno Kalnins' earlier extreme political radi-
calism. By the "Ulmansists" he is reproached for having been
in 1940 the chief political adviser or "politruk" of the
Latvian Army during the "popular-democratic" period; but,
according to reliable witnesses, Kalnins accepted
the post readily at the request of Gen. Ulmanis and
after a corresponding decision of the Latvian Social
Party Executive. In the face of obvious Soviet breach of
promise and subsequent sovietization of Latvia, he resigned.

8.
appears

The Latvian Central Council (LCC) at the present time
would seem to consist of the following members:
In Germany: Bishop Joseph RANCANS, head of the group,
Anglo-American Liberal, Secretary General of IOP
Kliva, representing Old Farmers, in LCP in Germany
BASTJANS, ex-German, in LCP in Germany
KRUKS, ex-German, former Minister of Finance
OJENS, Catholic, secondary school headmaster
Among other things, this group is in close contact with
members of LCP in Germany.

3

In Sweden: Bruno KÄRNS, Chairman of the group,
Ex-Foreign Minister of Denmark; Boorgaard,
Danish, M. of Parl. Janis ERIKSS, Liberal,
Member of Parliament, also chairman of the Liaison Committee in
Sweden; - cc.

Justice, Liberal;
General, Liberal;
Gov. Liberal;
Dr. Social Democrat;
Mrs. Social Democrat;
Prof. Agarian;
Asst. Prof. Agarian;
Engineer Agarian;
Gardener Agarian;
Karl Official of Latvian Liquor Monop.
Brons Catholic;
Rubenis ex-Mbr. Parl. Minst.;
Mrs. Agarian.

10. "LATVJU VARDAS", also a semi-weekly, issued by Norde, Johansons, Kurks, Oncls, and Broders (7), is the somewhat more conservative competitor. It is the paper of the "Ulmists" or the "colored group".

11. ~~Due to the similarity of the initials of 1 and 2 in~~
~~Latvian used generally in speech and intercourse, they are~~
~~sometimes confused. But while the Latvian Central Council~~
~~(same) is distinctly a political group, the Central Council~~
~~of Latvians is a purely human relief organization. Both are~~
~~represented on a third central organization, the LATVIAN NA-~~
~~TIONAL COUNCIL, constituted on July 29, 1941 in Denmark, and~~
~~made up of representatives from Germany and the Central Council of Lat-~~
~~vians being represented on the said National Council by its~~
~~executive, called the LATVIAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE, ("Latvian~~
~~Centrāls Komitejs"). This is still more apt to increase the~~
~~confusion. However, the Latvian Central Committee in Germany~~
~~is only the executive of the Central Council of Latvians, in~~

~~Writing this, there is no more detailed information about the Central Council of Latvians.~~

Because the initials of the Central Council of
Lithuania (CCP; Latvian: Centrālā Padome)
in Germany are identical with those of the German
Central Council (see above), the two groups are

Latvian National Council

12. The Latvian National Council (LNC; "Latvian National Ba-
dome"), located in Dorisgelingen (7), USA, is an at-
tempt to unite all Latvian political and other groups in ex-
ile round the Latvian Central Council (Bishop Baneans), which
itself is represented on 12 delegates. A complete and
full list of the groups and organizations forming this Nation-
al Council was given in the memorandum on the Latvian move-
ments in Europe and is therefore not repeated here.
The National Council is considered by many Latvians the
supreme parliamentary organization in exile; but other
patriotic Latvians point out to the extreme
of its composition, consider it therefore seriously in-
efficient and place the Latvian Central Council (of Bishop
Baneans) on top of all active Latvian refugee organizations.
The National Council is headed by Edgars, former Minister
of Public Education and former Director of the German-directed "Self-government" of
Latvia.

Latvian Committee

13. Latvian Committee, Västmannagatan 13, Stockholm,
Sweden is exclusively a refugee organization occupied with
sending parcels, books, food, and other relief from Sweden to
Latvian fellow-refugees in Germany and elsewhere. It is head-
ed by Edgars, former Minister of Public Education and former
Director of the German-directed "Self-government" of Latvia.
(see above) who is

Latvian National Fund

14. The Latvian National Fund, Stockholm,
Sweden is a recent organization, on the model of the older
Estonian National Fund, for the collection of money among
Latvian refugees for propaganda, publication of works, tra-
vels to important international gatherings from the Baltic
point of view, etc. At the present time nothing more is
known of its personnel activity etc. than that it has by
October 1948 succeeded in collecting some 4,000 kr. for the
above purposes, which is not bad for only some 3,500 Latvian
refugees in Sweden.

Summary of Latvian organizations and enterprises in Sweden

1. Latvian Central Council (Bishop Baneans and oph.).
2. Latvian Committee, Västmannagatan 13, Stockholm.
3. Latvian National Fund, essentially auxil. org. to 1.
4. Semi-weekly "Latvian Times", mouthpiece of 1.
5. Semi-weekly "Latvian Vardis".

200-7-11-14